

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
TYLER DIVISION**

**THE DAILY WIRE, LLC;**

**FDRSLT MEDIA, LLC; and**

**THE STATE OF TEXAS, by and through its  
Attorney General, Ken Paxton,**

*Plaintiffs,*

v.

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE;**

**GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER;**

**ANTONY BLINKEN, in his official capacity as  
Secretary of State;**

**LEAH BRAY, in her official capacity as Deputy  
Coordinator of the State Department's Global  
Engagement Center;**

**JAMES P. RUBIN, in his official capacity as  
Coordinator for the Global Engagement Center of the  
State Department;**

**DANIEL KIMMAGE, in his official capacity as the  
Principal Deputy Coordinator for the Global  
Engagement Center at the State Department;**

**ALEXIS FRISBIE, in her official capacity as Senior  
Technical Advisor of the Technology Engagement  
Team for the Global Engagement Center at the State  
Department;**

**PATRICIA WATTS, in her official capacity as the  
Director of the Technology Engagement Team at the  
Global Engagement Center at the State Department,**

*Defendants.*

**Civil Action No.: 6:23-cv-00609**

**EXHIBIT 2**

## Pope Francis' Removal Of Texas Bishop Exposes Cracks In The Vatican's Agenda

Available at: [thefederalist.com/2023/11/18/pope-francis-removal-of-conservative-texas-bishop-exposes-more-cracks-in-the-vaticans-new-agenda/](https://thefederalist.com/2023/11/18/pope-francis-removal-of-conservative-texas-bishop-exposes-more-cracks-in-the-vaticans-new-agenda/)

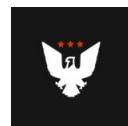


Religion

## Pope Francis' Removal Of Conservative Texas Bishop Exposes More Cracks In The Vatican's New Agenda

By: Carina Benton

The Vatican continues to please the rainbow mafia while mercilessly attacking the orthodox, the faithful, and the traditional.



The inevitable occurred last weekend when Pope Francis ousted Bishop Joseph Strickland from his Diocese of Tyler, Texas for reasons not yet provided, after “an exhaustive inquiry into all aspects of the governance and leadership of the diocese” was initiated back in June. According to a statement released on Saturday by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, who oversees the suffragan Diocese of Tyler, the recommendation given to the Pope was that the “continuation in office of Bishop Strickland was not feasible.”

Despite reports that issues of “governance … financial matters, [and] basic prudence” prompted the investigation into Strickland, no administrative concerns were mentioned in a Nov. 9 conversation between the bishop and Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Cardinal Christophe Pierre. Instead, the Nuncio cited as areas of concern Strickland’s “fraternity with [his] brother bishops,” his so-called failure to implement “Traditionis Custodes” — the Vatican’s restrictions on the celebration of the pre-1969 Latin form of the Mass, his outspoken social media presence, and a lack of support for the Synod on Synodality.

When Strickland, who was appointed Bishop of Tyler more than 10 years ago, declined the invitation to resign from office, the Holy Father personally showed him the door.

It just so happens that Strickland received the June 24 “apostolic visitation” days after he returned from leading a prayer procession in response to the honoring of a blasphemous, anti-Catholic hate group, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, on the Dodgers’ 10th annual “Pride Night,” a date which coincided with the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Vatican’s timing in all of this was, as always, impeccable.

A survey of the issues Bishop Strickland speaks out on should leave Catholics in no doubt as to how Rome regards this orthodox, humble, and courageous prelate, and the gentle influence he has among American Catholics. Strickland has labeled abortion and same-sex “marriage” policies as transhumanist ideas that are being advanced as part of a “godless agenda.” He has been a vocal critic of public officials who identify as Catholic yet reject Catholic teaching on the evil of abortion, and has advocated against receiving Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin.

On the eve of the Vatican’s supposedly Holy Spirit-guided, tautologically named Synod on Synodality, which every thinking Catholic and his dog understands is a backdoor route for ushering in major changes to the church, Strickland released a message calling on Catholics to hold fast to the truths of the faith. He urged wariness against “any attempt … to push for a faith that speaks of dialogue and brotherhood while attempting to remove the Fatherhood of God.”

## Guess Which Bishops Rome Leaves Alone?

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It's therefore no coincidence that Strickland suddenly had the papal hounds sniffing around his diocese. Guess which bishops didn't get a visit last summer? Cardinal Blaise Cupich, of the Archdiocese of Chicago, who in June celebrated mass for an LGBT Catholic outreach group celebrating 35 years of service, won't get any ominous knocks at his rectory door. Cardinal Wilton Gregory and Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, in whose respective Dioceses of Washington D.C. and Newark, New Jersey, sodomy-celebration masses were hosted, are still footloose and fancy-free. In fact, Cupich, Gregory, and Tobin, along with Archbishop Paul Etienne, who permitted a pride picnic to take place in a notoriously heterodox Seattle parish, were all personally appointed by Pope Francis as delegates to the first general assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality. Incidentally, so was Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of San Diego, whose meteoric rise to the College of Cardinals George Neumayr, late Editor at The American Spectator, endeavored to shed light on just weeks before his tragic death in January.

The defiant German Bishops have been given a free pass for years now. Cardinal Claude Hollerich, archbishop of Luxembourg and president of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, who last year stated that the church needed to update its sociologically and scientifically incorrect teaching of homosexuality, was later hand-picked by Pope Francis to serve as relator general of the Synod.

Despite the prima facie nixing of same-sex union blessings, Pope Francis is allowing it all to go on anyway. This appeases both the rainbow mafia, while allowing the conservative normies to sleep peacefully at night, content that all is well in Rome.

Meanwhile, the Vatican mercilessly pursues its real antagonist: the orthodox, the faithful, and the traditional. The removal of Bishop Strickland transcends the man and his diocese. It's about the conflict between what Catholics must believe for the salvation of their souls versus what serpentine apostates would have them profess, to the eternal damnation of both those who perpetuate the lie and those seduced by it.

## **Look to St. Athanasius**

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On the bright side, Bishop Strickland is following in the illustrious footsteps of the revered early church father, St. Athanasius of Alexandria, who earned the distinction of being driven into exile five times for a cumulative period of 17 years by a pack of devious clerics, hell-bent on spreading the Arian heresy. The Alexandrian heretic-priest Arius began disseminating this poison shortly after the 313 Edict of Milan put an end to the persecution of Christians throughout the Roman Empire. Arius's lie, according to which Jesus the Christ was not *eternally begotten of the Father* but rather *made*, pierces the heart of the Trinitarian doctrine. For if the *Logos* was not a true God, but a creation of God, His divinity is diminished, and our Lord is reduced to a "halfway" God.

Not so! said the gentle but intransigent Athanasius in his famous text “On the Incarnation of the Word” published just prior to the Arian explosion: “The renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word Who made it in the beginning. ...the One Father has employed the same Agent for both works, effecting the salvation of the world through the same Word Who made in the beginning.”

Even after Arianism was condemned at the 325 Council of Nicaea, and its principal instigator admonished, the movement persisted and even appeared to prevail. Athanasius, as bishop of Alexandria, defended authentic faith in Christ and thus found himself *contra mundum*. Naturally, his opponents didn’t spar with him on theological grounds — they had no such ground to stand on — but instead sought to undermine his credibility and hound him from his see by leveling petty allegations.

For 30 years, Athanasius’s enemies manipulated the allegiances, priorities, and weaknesses of successive emperors and popes to bring phony charges against him, ranging from misappropriating and mismanaging church property to raising sedition, promoting violence, and even murder.

After his fifth exile, Athanasius was reinstated to his see, where he remained, triumphant, for the remainder of his life, and has ever since been lauded as a pillar of the Catholic faith. He is one of the four saints who surround the throne of St. Peter in the magnificent baroque sculpture that sits in the apse of the Vatican Basilica. C.S. Lewis said of Athanasius this: “It is his glory that he did not move with the times. It is his reward that he now remains when those times, as all times do, have moved away.”

Like St. Athanasius, Bishop Strickland stands resolute against a reimagining of doctrine that would shake the very foundations of the church. The 2<sup>nd</sup> century Bishop of Lyons, St. Ireneus, warned that all heresies have in common their insidious attack on the fully human, fully divine Jesus Christ. The homo-heresy, by downgrading God’s law to suggestions only, is no different. If divine revelation can always be “interpreted better,” then by what standard does Christ judge? And if He cannot judge, He cannot redeem; if He cannot redeem, man cannot be saved, and the God-Man is thereby demoted to a sensible teacher, and the whole Christian faith is reduced to a lie.

But it isn’t a lie, and Bishop Strickland of course knows this, which is why he intuits that the attack on him is motivated by “forces within the church [that] don’t want the truth of the Gospel.” For the late Australian Cardinal George Pell, the question was this: does the church teach publicly what Christ taught, fully aware that some of those teachings are unpopular?

The men currently pulling the levers of power in Rome seem to be replying with noncommittal cynicism. Despite this, Catholics must avoid the trap and resist abandoning the church or rejecting the Supreme Pontiff, whom God Himself has placed in St. Peter’s chair and whose role in carrying out God’s will for His church we cannot fathom.

Yet at the same time, the faithful — laity and clergy alike — must accept that clinging to the deposit of faith may entail having a pseudo-schism forced on them, and finding themselves, like Strickland, very much *contra mundum*.

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Carina Benton is a dual citizen of Australia and Italy and a permanent resident of the United States. A recent West Coast émigré, she is now helping to repopulate the country's interior. She holds a master's degree in education and has taught languages, literature, and writing for many years in Catholic and Christian, as well as secular institutions. She is a practicing Catholic and a mother of two young children.